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Message Text

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41
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 SWF-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05

EB-04 FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-06 CIEP-01 LAB-01

SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 /058 W
---------- 022115
R 270940Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2124
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, HU
SUBJ: HUNGARIAN HARVEST SITUATION

PASS USDA

1. CONTINUED HEAVY RAINS HAVE HEIGHTENED ALREADY REPORTED CONCERNS IN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY REGARDING CORN, SUGAR BEET AND GRAPE CROPS. SINCE FIRST OF OCT THERE HAVE BEEN ALMOST DAILY RAINS AND TOTAL 75-120 MM OF PRECIPITATION HAS BEEN RECORDED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH, AS YET, NO FROSTS HAVE BEEN RECORDED, TEMPERATURES HAVE DIPPED AS LOW AS 1 DEGREE CENTIGRADE AND POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS FROST DAMAGE PARTICULARLY TO CORN AND GRAPE CROPS INCREASE EACH DAY.
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2. DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, GABOR SOOS, ADMITTING ON OCT 15 THAT BAD WEATHER HAD SERIOUSLY SLOWED HARVESTING EFFORT, STATED THAT TO DATE ONLY 8-10 PERCENT OF CORN CROP HAD BEEN HARVESTED IN COMPARISON TO 50 PERCENT AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR. IN ADDITION, 65 PERCENT OF SUGAR BEETS CROP AND 75 PERCENT OF GRAPES ARE STILL IN FIELDS. FALL GRAIN PLANTING HAS ALSO MET WITH SERIOUS OBSTACLES DUE TO WEATHER AND SO FAR ONLY 18 PERCENT OF GRAIN CROP HAS BEEN PLANTED IN COMPARISON TO 64 PERCENT WHICH WAS IN GROUND AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR. THE PLANTING OF FALL WHEAT, THE STAPLE HUNGARIAN GRAIN, IS 600,000 HECTARES BEHIND LAST YEAR'S PACE. SOOS CHARACTERIZED THE DELAY IN PLANTING OF GRAIN CROP AS BEING EVEN MORE SERIOUS THAN THE DELAYS IN THE FALL HARVEST.

3. PRESENT SITUATION HAS PROMPTED ANXIOUS NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL AND TELEVISION APPEALS FOR URGENT HELP IN CARRYING NECESSARY AGRICULTURAL WORK. A NUMBER OF HARVEST AND EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO RECRUIT LARGE NUMBER HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR WORK IN FIELDS.

4. IN ADDITION TO DIFFICULTIES WITH HARVEST AND PLANTING, UNSOLD MEAT SURPLUSES RESULTING FROM EEC BAN ON MEAT IMPORTS CONTINUE TO WORRY OFFICIALS AND THERE IS WIDESPREAD PESSIMISM CONCERNING POSSIBILITY OF FAVORABLE RESOLUTION THIS QUESTION IN NEAR FUTURE. SOVIET PURCHASE OF SIZABLE QUANTITY OF HUNGARIAN MEAT, APPARENTLY FOR HARD CURRENCY, HAS BEEN TEMPORARY HELP. HOWEVER, AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN DEALING WITH AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS REPORT STATE AND COLLECTIVE FARM ORGANIZATIONS EXPECTING DRASTICALLY REDUCED HARD CURRENCY RECEIPTS AS RESULT OF MEAT EMBARGO AND A NUMBER OF INVESTMENTS INCLUDING LARGE HOG-FATTENING COMPLEX WHICH WAS TO BE CONSTRUCTED WITH ASSISTANCE OF RALSTON-PURINA COMPANY HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TEMPORARILY SHELVED.
PEDERSEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 OCT 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUDAPE02913
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740295-0877
From: BUDAPEST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741012/aaaaajwj.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <23 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUNGARIAN HARVEST SITUATION PASS USDA
TAGS: EAGR, HU
To: STATE VIENNA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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